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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
New MEETING-HOUSE
IN
CARTER-LANE,

Dec. 5. 1734.

Being the
FIRST-DAY of OPENING it
FOR
RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

By SAMUEL WRIGHT, D.D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for RICHARD HETT, at the Bible and Crown in the
Poultry. MDCCXXXV.

SEERMON



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Printed by T. Bland, at the Theatre Royal, in Pall Mall.
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(1)
2 CHRONIC. VI. 40.

“ Now my God, let I beseech thee thine
“ Eyes be open, and let thine Ears be at-
“ tent unto the Prayer that is made in this
“ Place.

TH E S E Words are in the *Cloſe* of Solomon's Prayer at the Dedication of his Temple. But I hope none will imagine they are now inſiſted on, with a View to any ſuch kind of *Conſecration* of this Building, as that which we read of in this Chapter. There is no *peculiarity* in any Places that are devoted to the Chriſtian Worſhip, as there was in *that Temple* which God choſe for his Reſidence of old. There he appeared in a *viſible Glory*, and there the ſpecial Tokens of his Covenant with *Iſrael* abode and were fixt; thither their Sacrifices and Offerings were to be brought from all Parts of the Land; and in their Devotions, wherever they ſhould be caſt, they were directed to look toward the *Temple* as the Seat and Court of their *King*, and God, *Dan. vi. 10.*

But now we are aſſured, That neither at *Jeruſalem*, nor on the Mountain of *Samaria*, nor in any other Place where God is worſhipped, are Men to expect the Acceptance of their religious Services on account of the *Place*. They that *worſhip the Father* as Chriſt hath taught; are ſuch as *worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth* *. For God is a Spirit, and therefore that Worſhip, which is ſuitable to his Nature, muſt be *ſpiritual*: And it muſt alſo be *in Truth*, ſuch as he hath *preſcribed*, and ſuch as proceeds from a *true* and engaged Heart.

* John iv. 24.

The Gospel teacheth us to direct all our Prayers, and Praises, to our FATHER IN HEAVEN: And, since our Saviour's Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven, the Apostolical Writings direct us to look to the Deity there Dwelling in our Nature, in the Person of Jesus Christ; Who is seated on a Throne of Grace, dispensing his heavenly Gifts, and continually making Intercession for us. We are therefore encouraged, and required, to raise our Thoughts and Hearts to the *Heavens*, whenever we worship as Christians. For this Reason we are to look toward no *earthly Temple*, nor to promise our selves any special Presence of God for the Sake of the *Fabrick* or *House* in which we worship, whether mean or stately, whether of one *Form* or another. The God we adore dwelleth not in *Temples made with Hands*. This we are to conceive of, as becomes our Belief of the Divine *Immensity*; and in opposition to the Worshippers of *Idols*, who imagined their Deities had a local confin'd Residence in the *Images* they set up, and in the Groves they planted, or the Buildings they raised for them. They were called Gods of the *Hills*, or of the *Valleys*, or of one particular *Place* or *Country*, without supposing their Influence to extend any further than the prescribed Limits. But the Name of our God is excellent throughout all the Earth; he made the *Heavens*, and gloriously resides there, and thither our Desires and Affections must be carried, if we hope to find Mercy and Acceptance with him.

Further, as Christianity knows nothing of sacred *Edifices* or *Temples*, I may also add, that a Building for religious Worship is improperly called a CHURCH. Because it is the *Congregation* assembled for Christian Worship in the Faith of the Gospel, and according to the Ordinances of it, that make a Church. So our *Articles* of Religion expressly declare. *The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation*
of

Place of Worship in Carter-Lane. 3

of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly ministred, according to Christ's Ordinance, in all those things that of Necessity are requisite to the same. Since therefore, by a Figure, the Place containing is put for the Congregation or People there contained, every Place where such as believe Christianity meet together, that the pure Word of God may be preached and the Sacraments duly administred, hath the same Reason on these Accounts to be called a Church.

As to Buildings of this kind, I beg Leave very briefly to say a few things, to shew the Principles we have gone upon, and the Temper with which we have acted in erecting this Place.

Our Blessed Lord having appointed *Social Worship* to be kept up amongst Men, and having given Orders to gather Churches in all Nations, it is therefore necessary that those Churches should have Places to meet in for the Worship to be performed. And because it is given in Charge to all the Members of such religious Societies, That they should *not forsake the Assembling of themselves together* *, therefore it is their Duty to make Provision as they are able, and judge requisite, that these religious Assemblies may be kept up. And since Christ hath declared that his Kingdom is not of this World, and that all such as are approved Subjects of it should act with perfect Freedom, and upon voluntary Consent (or in other Words, that the Members of the Church of Christ should be a *willing People*, not a constrained or forced People, *Psal. cx. 3.*) therefore the Powers of this Earth, however they may see fit to encourage one or other particular Form, yet we humbly apprehend should not authoritatively interpose in matters of this Nature; but should leave all peaceable and good Subjects, to such Ways of Worship as they judge most agreeable to the Word of God, and

* Heb. x. 25.

4 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

most conducive to promote Knowledge and Holiness, and the final Salvation of their Souls.

I say, all *peaceable*, and good Subjects, should be allowed this *Liberty of Conscience*; not meaning to plead for any Pretences of Conscience where Men are *Despisers of Civil Authority*, and known Enemies to the *Government* under which they live.

To proceed: As far as the Civil Power doth indulge this religious Liberty, it is but according to the Rules of *Prudence* in other Cases, that Men should make the best Improvement of the Favour granted them in this Case. That is, to make such Provision for themselves as the Circumstances of every Christian Church or Society shall enable them to do. And whilst such Societies are promoting and maintaining the Christian Faith against *Infidelity*, and Christian Virtue against *Immoralities* of all kinds, the Publick is greatly benefited by them, but can be no way prejudiced or disturbed.

To worship in different *Places*, and in divers *Manners* in the Pursuit of these great Ends, and to maintain Christian Love and Charity together with such *Variety*, will be more likely to recommend *Christianity* to Men of different Tempers, Capacities, and Attainments, than if all were obliged and confined to *one particular Form and Way*.

As to the common Charge of *Heresy* or *Schism* that some are continually throwing out against us, I beg leave to observe as follows: Namely, That there may be *Heresies* among those that do all comply with the *same outward Forms*; and there may be grievous *Schisms* among them that all come together into *one Place*: So it was in the Church of *Corinth*.
“ When you come *together in the Church*, I hear,
“ *saith St. Paul*, there be Divisions [the Greek Word
“ is *Schisms*] amongst you:” And their coming together in the Church he explains, not only by their being of *one Way*, but by their coming together into
one

Place of Worship in Carter-Lane. 5

one and the same Place, 1 Cor. xi. 18. On the other hand there may be different Usages, and different Places of Worship, whilst yet the Unity of the Christian Faith is maintained, and a Christian Temper is preserved. The various Usages allowed in the first Christian Churches, plainly shew that there may be great Variety in Worship, as well as in Observances of Days and other things, without hurting either Christian Faith or Unity.

We thank God our Lot is cast in a Kingdom where the Religion of the State is both Christian, and Protestant. And we count it a very great Blessing, that the Principles of both are so well stated, and defended, by those whom the Government sees fit to honour. But we esteem it an additional Blessing, that we are allowed to choose the way of worshipping the God of our Fathers, by searching the Scriptures and judging for ourselves. In doing this, we would not by any means discover a factious, censorious, envious Spirit and Temper. Yea though our Souls are exceedingly filled with the Contempt of some that are at Ease; and many popular Prejudices are, without Cause, raised against us; and several Methods have been contrived (with too much Success) to excite Grudges amongst us, and to make us utter our Groans and Complaints one against another; yet under all our Disadvantages, we desire to make the Publick Good our continual Care and Study.

With these Sentiments and Views of things, this PLACE is built for the WORSHIP of God, and for celebrating all the Ordinances of the Gospel: And we are now met together to pray that the Presence of God may be with us, and that our religious Services here may be blessed from time to time, so as to promote Christian Faith and Love, with all publick Virtues, and to prepare us for a Building not made with Hands eternal in the Heavens.

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26 A SERMON at the Opening of the

I shall therefore enlarge on the Words of the Text before us, by accommodating them to the *present Occasion*. “ Now my GOD, let I beseech thee thine Eyes be open, and let thine Ears be attentive unto the Prayer that is made in this Place.” In other Words, “ Let our Worship in all the Parts of it, and particularly our Prayers, be favoured with the gracious *Notice* of that GOD who hath said, *The Prayer of the Upright is his Delight*. “ And grant us such Proofs of a DIVINE PRESENCE, and a merciful *Audience*, that we may have a Desire to this Place, and to the Assembly of them that shall here keep Holy Day.

A Christian Congregation putting up to GOD such Requests as these, should enlarge their Thoughts to the whole CHURCH of CHRIST. And therefore if we pray with a right Spirit for the continual Presence and Favour of GOD in this Place, we shall earnestly desire that in all other Places where he is worshipped according to the Directions of the Gospel, the Prayers of his faithful Servants may be heard, and that his Word may have *free Course* and be glorified. And because there are many Disputes and Contentions, great Errors and Iniquities, that now hinder the *free Course* of the Gospel; and have brought a kind of *Death* upon the Institutions of GOD's Worship, and on many of those that attend them; therefore we should pray for a fresh Effusion of the SPIRIT of Life, Light, and Love, as far as the Presence of such a *Spirit* in and with the Church of Christ is promised in the New Testament. And thus far surely we are encouraged to pray for it, That the Spirit which *accompanies the Gospel* in them that believe, may be superior in Wisdom, Goodness and active Power, to the Spirit that worketh in the *Children of Disobedience* *.

Without

* 1 John iv. 4.

Place of Worship in Carter-Lane. 7

Without this SPIRIT, the Christian Worship is not likely to be attended with that Profit, and Delight, which will make Men constant and persevering in it. How can it be Thought, that Men should love the *Habitation of God's House*, and count his Tabernacles *amiable*, unless they meet with such inward and spiritual Blessings there, as shall exalt and better their Minds, in a way quite different from their Converses with the World? And how shall this be effected, but by a *Faith that standeth not in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God**? The Body of Christians are “a Building fitly framed together, growing unto an Holy Temple in the Lord; being builded together in him, for an Habitation of GOD, through the SPIRIT†.”

Having carried your Thoughts to this Presence of GOD in the Christian Church, it will be very proper to shew,

I. That it is more desireable to have the SPIRIT of CHRIST present with us, than to have such outward and sensible Tokens of GOD's Presence as those in the *Jewish Temple*.

II. What there is in the Prayer which our Text refers to, that may become a Christian Church, and the Occasion which has now brought us together.

III. In what manner our Prayers should be offered unto GOD, that we may obtain his attentive and favourable Regards to them. Of these in their Order.

I. It is more desireable to have the SPIRIT of CHRIST present with us, than to have such outward and sensible Tokens of GOD's Presence as those in the *Jewish Temple*.

If we look to the Beginning of the Chapter after our Text, we read of a *Fire from Heaven* consuming the Sacrifice; and a *visible Glory* filling the

* 1 Cor. ii. 5:

† Eph. ii. 21, 22.

8 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

House of the LORD. In other Places we read of a *Voice*, speaking from the *Mercy Seat* between the two Cherubims: And on this Account God is often described by his *dwelling between the Cherubims**. There were also *extraordinary Visions* and Apparitions in the Temple upon great Occasions. And there was the ORACLE of *Urim* and *Thummim*, in the Breast-Plate of the High Priest; whereby *Counsel* and *Direction* was given, to those that sought it from God upon special Emergencies.

Some may be apt to think, that *These* were great Advantages and Helps in Divine Worship, and were very powerful Attractives to bring Men to the Temple of God. What an effect would it have (may such Persons say) to see a Pillar of Light, or a great *visible Glory*, filling a Place of Worship! And to hear a *Voice* from that Cloud of Glory, declaring the things of God, How would it fix the Attention and engage the Obedience of Men! Would not this be more effectual to produce Reverence in Worship, and to command Observance of the things required after the Worship was over, than to have only the Ministry of Men? Would not this be better than to see a Man of like Passions with ourselves employed in Sacramental Transactions, and to hear a Voice that is sometimes weakned by Fear, or enfeebled by other human Infirmities, publishing the Oracles of God? To have nothing that shall move us, further, than our Minds are engaged by the *Truth* and *Importance* of the things we hear, and by those Services that are performed being considered as *reasonable Services*, will reach but to a *very few* compared with the Bulk of Mankind. So it may be argued.

In answer to this, it is allowed, That there is nothing, in the *present Ministrations* of the Gospel,

* Numb. vii. 89. 2 Kings xix. 15. Psal. xcix. 1, &c.

to make any great Impressions on *vain* and *unreasonable* Men. But we are to consider, that instead of awing them by such terrible Sounds and Sight as would make the very Beasts tremble; GOD is exciting them to exercise their *Reason*, earnestly (yet patiently) soliciting all that would be saved, to hear and learn of his SON; and in so doing he hath promised his HOLY SPIRIT to *them that ask him*: By whose inward Operations, the things published from the Word of Truth have much more powerful and lasting Effects, upon the *Hearts* and *Lives* of such as by *Faith* receive them, than could be produced by any external *Appearances* of Glory, or *Voices* from thence.

The Presence of GOD by his SPIRIT, we shall find to be a much greater and more desirable Blessing, than any *external Symbols* or *Tokens* of it, if we consider the following Particulars.

1. External Appearances may very strongly impress the Senses and the Imagination, without any *Improvement of the Mind*, or producing any *Change* in the *Will* or *Heart*.

This was proved in fact, when the People of *Israel* beheld the *Glory* and *Terror* of GOD's Appearance*. Whilst that was before their Eyes, they cry out, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will hear and do it:" And yet in a *few Days* time good Impressions wore off, and they turned again to their *Iniquity* and *Idolatry*†. Also in *Solomon's Temple* it is said, "When all the Children of *Israel* saw how the Fire came down, and the Glory of the LORD upon the House, They bowed themselves with their Faces to the Ground upon the Pavement, and worshipped; and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good for his Mercy endureth for ever." Yet they soon after forsook

* Exod. xix.

† Exod. xxxii.

10 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

GOD, when *another King* arose; and left that very Temple, in which they had been so greatly affected with the *Sights* there presented to them. It will in some measure account for this, to consider,

2. External Appearances and Oracles when Men *were used to them*, would make as little Impression as *other Works of God* in the *Heavens* do, which are daily looked upon.

What could any Man see of the Great God in a *Pillar of Light* and Glory, more than in the *Sun*, the great Fountain of Light to this visible World? What would there be in a shining *Cloud* upon a particular House, or within the House, more than in some Appearances of *Lights* in the *Air*, and *Fire* in the *Clouds* of Heaven? People can behold these with all the Unconcernedness imaginable, after they have looked upon them a few Times, and find them harmless. Or what would any *Oracle* signify speaking from a particular *Station*, or giving Counsel by a *Breast-plate*, (*i. e.* either by a Lustre or Darknes thrown upon the *Jewels* of it, or by Letters and Words being made to appear in them,) what, I say, would this signify, when the *Priests* of the *Sun*, and of other Idols, had their *Voices* and *Oracles* too? As these were sometimes managed, Men were liable to be imposed upon; and so to distrust *one* as well as *another*, and to reject all in time, if they should ever be at a Loss to distinguish betwixt the *True* and the *False*.

But now to have the *glorious Perfections* of God, together with his *Will* or *Law*, clearly discovered to our *Reason*: To be taught from the Operations of our own Minds, to conceive *what is good*, and what the LORD *requireth of us*: And at the same Time to have all written out more perfectly, and certainly by the Direction of the SPIRIT of Truth and Goodness, that we may compare the *Law in our Hearts*, with the Law given us in the *Scripture*:

And when we are thus provided and instructed, to bid us use our reasonable Powers in *comparing spiritual Things* with *spiritual*: How much more is *this way* likely to engage our *continual* Homage, and our *persevering* Obedience, than any *outward Symbols* of a Divine Presence would be?

The SPIRIT of the Gospel dealing in this manner with the *Spirits* of Men, and teaching all that present themselves to God ever to do it as a *reasonable Service*, and thus making all true Christian Worshippers a *willing People*, is a State of Things (beyond all question) preferable to the Glories of the first *Jewish Temple*. The external Appearances and Oracles there, conveyed no such clear, and certain, and delightful Instructions, as the Ministrations of the SPIRIT under the Gospel do. To proceed

3. Those Instructions which were conveyed by the Oracles of old, had no such *inward Help* and *Strength accompanying them*, as the Gospel Ministrations have.

That SPIRIT which accompanies the Ordinances and the publishing of the Gospel, hath such Operations on the Minds and Hearts of Men ascribed to him, as were only prophesied of, and more distantly known, under former Dispensations. He hath a regenerating Power, to form and quicken to a new Life; which is called a being *born of the Spirit* *. He gives such a *Knowledge* of the Divine Will, in all *Wisdom and spiritual Understanding*, as to make men *fruitful in every good Work* †. Knowledge that makes *fruitful*, or the connecting of *Wisdom* and *good Works*, is the *new Nature* of all them that are *born of the SPIRIT*.

Again; the *strengthening* Operations of this SPIRIT are distinguished from his *enlightening* the Mind. “ We are strengthened with all might according to

* John iii. 5, 6.

† Coloss. i. 9, 10.

12 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

“ his glorious Power * , unto all Patience and long
“ Suffering with Joyfulness.” To be strengthened
with all *might according to his glorious Power* to an in-
vincible *Patience*, yea a *joyful* Patience, in the way of
our Duty, is manifestly different from the bare Know-
ledge and discerning of things.

Moreover, the Scripture saith, that “ the *Love*
“ of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the
“ *Holy Ghost* which is given to us †.” Instead of
a *Spirit of Fear*, which makes a Man shrink from
Labours and Troubles, and makes a Creature fold
up into itself for Security and Ease, the Holy Ghost
sheds abroad *Love in the Heart* ; which carries out
of *self*, and produceth Diligence, and Patience, and
Hope in all the Services of Religion, and in all the
Exercises of Charity, under the greatest Troubles
and Afflictions of Life.

Now, what are all external Appearances of the
Deity, compared with the Presence of this SPIRIT
of *Life, Light, and Love*? By Him our Minds are
quickened, and put into a right way of exerting their
reasonable Powers. Hereby they are *strengthened*
in the Discharge of their Duty, and *supported* under
all Difficulties. And all is done by *Love*, which is
an unwearied Principle, and makes the Service of
God *perfect Freedom*. The whole *Practice* of Reli-
gion becomes a Life and State of *Love*.

4. The Gospel Ministrations being accompanied
with such a SPIRIT, render the *Christian Churches*
more *truly amiable and desirable*, than any *Taber-
nacle or Temple* could be with its *outward and sensi-
ble Tokens* of the *Divine Presence*.

To do Justice to the Subject I am upon, it must
be owned, that beside the sensible Proofs of the
Presence of God before mentioned, the *Jewish Writ-*

* Coloss. i. 11.

† Rom. v. 5.

ings also speak of the Spirit of Holiness, or the *Inspiration of the Holy Ghost* *. This, in their Account of it, was without Terror; without Amazement and Loss of the Senses, which we read was frequently occasioned by Apparitions and Voices. But the *Talmud* says, that the *Holy Ghost departed from Israel* after the Prophecy of *Malachi*. And the Knowledge of this Presence of God with Men, was so far lost in the Days of the *Apostles*, that we are told of some “ who had not so much as heard “ whether there be any Holy Ghost †.” These Persons being *baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, though they were unacquainted with this Method of God’s impressing and exalting the human Mind, yet had the Holy Ghost in an extraordinary manner given to them. But his Direction and Assistance granted to the reasonable Powers, was not only for the first *planting*, and *writing* the Gospel; but, by the same SPIRIT, the Gospel Revelations and Institutions are rendered effectual to answer all the *Ends* of God’s gracious Residence with Men, till the Kingdom of Glory come.

The Difference betwixt the *Jewish* and *Christian* State, as to the Communication of the SPIRIT, we may learn by observing, That where the ancient *Prophets* speak of the Days of the *Messiah*, they describe the *new Covenant* [or the Gospel Covenant] by God’s putting his SPIRIT more *generally* into the Hearts of Men, and impressing the things of Religion more *powerfully* upon them, that they should not depart from the living God as the *Jews*

* The [*Ruach Hacoresh*] was not confined to a prophetick Inspiration with *extraordinary Gifts*, but to signify great Impressions of *Piety*. Therefore the Word [*Hacoresh*] is observed to be an hundred Times in the Old Testament translated [*Holy and Holiness*.] The Prophets who were blessed with this, are mostly filled with a Zeal for *things moral* and for *real Holiness*.

† Acts xix. 2.

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14 A SERMON at the Opening of the

were prone to do. Therefore the pouring out of this SPIRIT is not only foretold in his *extraordinary* Gifts, by Joel * and others: But it is promised as the great Blessing of the *Messia's* Kingdom, being annexed to the *Covenant itself*, which God in these last Days makes with Men †.

Where any had a firm Belief of such Prophecies, and were blessed with this *free Spirit* as David was, they had the like Reason, for counting a Day in God's Courts better than a thousand elsewhere, that we have. And it is no wonder, that such should long and faint for the Courts of the LORD; and should desire this *one thing*, and seek after it, "To dwell in the House of the LORD all their Days." But then from hence we may argue, That if the SPIRIT of Prophecy, and a *Fore-taste* of our Blessings, made the Worship of God so entertaining and transporting to them; much more should the things that we see and hear, render the Gospel Worship dear and valuable to us. "For verily (saith our Saviour) many Prophets and righteous Men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them †."

Upon this Declaration, we may fitly ground what I am now going to say. That where the Gospel Ministrations are managed, as becomes those that are to declare the *whole Counsel* of God concerning Man's Salvation, from the *Beginning* of the World to the *End* of it; and where the SPIRIT of *Light, Love, and Power* accompanies these Ministrations, to give them their proper Effects; there God is present in a more *perfect* and *full* Discovery of HIMSELF, in and through his SON, than ever he

* Joel ii. 28. Isa. xlv. 3.

† Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

‡ Mat. xiii. 17.

was while he spake at *sundry Times*, and in *divers Manners* to the Fathers by his Prophets *.

The Ministrations of Christianity thus considered, are not lessened at all, by being committed to Men of *like Passions* with your selves. They are rather magnified, in the Salvation of Souls by such despised Instruments. “ For we have this Treasure in earthen “ Vessels, that the Excellency of the Power may “ be of God, and not of us †.” If any among us whose Ministry God is pleased to crown with Success, be really Men of such weak Minds, and poor Attainments, or disorderly Tempers, as not only our Enemies, but some of our pretended Friends would have them thought to be; then they are living Examples, and such as become *Seals* to their Ministry are *living Witnesses* and *Proofs*, of the Wisdom and Power of God; in that it pleaseth him, by what the *Wisdom of this World* still calls the *Foolishness of Preaching*, to save them that believe ‡.

To what hath been said, let it be added, that the Ministrations of the SPIRIT have these further Advantages above all the Ministrations of the Law of *Moses*; namely, that they are not accompanied with such *Terror* and *Condemnation* on account of a Multitude of *ritual Offences*; and they shall not be *done away*, as the legal Services are ||; yet in them we have the *Substance*, and the *good things* themselves of which the Law had only the *Shadow* §. Thus I have done with the *first* general Head; from whence we learn to make it our principal Concern and Desire, that God would grant us the *continual Presence* of his *good Spirit*.

* Heb. i. 1. compared with *Acts* xx. 27. and *Ephes.* i.

† 2 Cor. iv. 7.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 21, &c.

|| 2 Cor. iii. 6, &c.

§ Heb. x. 1.

II. Let us next proceed to consider what there is in *the Prayer* our Text refers to, that will become a *Christian Church*, and may be accommodated to the *present Occasion*. “Now my God, “let I beseech thee thine Eyes be open, and thine “Ears be attent unto the Prayer that is made in this “Place.”

I have no Apprehension that any of this Congregation will misunderstand, or take Offence at, the speaking of God as if he had *Eyes* or *Ears* like ourselves. And therefore it was thought sufficient in explaining these Terms, only to say, That God’s kind and merciful *Observance* of us, and his gracious *Audience* of the Prayers put up to him, are the Favours requested. To follow Men of *cavilling Tempers* in all their Objections against *Scripture Phrases*, often takes up that time which ought to be spent in delivering things more useful and important. Instead of spending any of the present Moments in this way, I shall proceed to the *particular Requests*, in which the Prayer before our Text may be a Guide to us.

I. We are led to request in general; That the Eyes of God *be open upon this House Day and Night*. So it is expressed *Verse 20.* of this Chapter.

When *Solomon* thus pray’d, probably he had the Morning and Evening *Sacrifices* in his Thoughts, with the *daily* continual Services of the Temple. But as the *Targum* expounds it concerning the *Divine Providence* and *Protection**, so, if thus applied, it will be a Request proper for us this Day. We may suit it to our own Case in the manner following. “O Lord, by thy watchful Providence “and merciful Protection, secure this House from

* Patrick in loc.

“ calamitous Accidents, and from spiteful Men.
 “ That no Flames may consume it, or drive us
 “ from it as they did from the former House. Bless
 “ and protect the Neighbourhood into which we
 “ are come, that they may fare the better for us,
 “ and we may find Peace and Rest with them.
 “ Let not this House be torn to Pieces by *popular*
 “ *Tumults* as the former was. And let it not perish,
 “ with others, by any *national Judgments*. But
 “ grant that the continual Intercessions of our wor-
 “ shipping Assemblies, for this *City*, and for the
 “ *Government* under which we live, may be a
 “ means of averting those Evils that our Sins de-
 “ serve.

I hope in God, that *open Persecutions* will no more be known in this Land, on any side; since all in their turn have felt the *Misery*, and own'd the *Iniquity* of them. And nothing, I trust, will ever happen to expose us to the *just Resentment* of the *Civil Powers*. But if the Apprehensions of Bishop *Usher* and others in the last Age were right, there will be grievous Troubles throughout *Christendom*, when Popery shall make its last Efforts. And from the Progress of the Wars now abroad, and the number of *Romanists* in this Kingdom, we have Reason to fear such a Time is hastening apace. Every advance of the Principles and Spirit and Power of *Popery*, We have special Reason to dread, because of the peculiar *Aversion* which that will ever raise to us. And therefore we have need to pray that God would be our *hiding Place*, whenever a Storm from that Quarter threatens the Protestant Interest. In such a Situation of things, we should earnestly request the *Divine Protection Day and Night*.

2. We may pray that all solemn *Oaths*, or *Sacramental Vows* in this House, be made in *Truth* and *Righteousness*. That no Wickedness may be found here, without being exposed, and the vile

D

Person

18 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

Person convicted. And that God would ever justify and accept the Righteous. This is mentioned purely *in allusion* to the 22d and 23d Verses ; for without doubt, what is there said had a very *different Meaning*, as it was applied to the judging of the Righteous and Wicked of old, and the *Oaths* that were taken *before the Altar*. Therefore to pass off from that,

3. If any Sins are committed in *departing from* the Worship and Ordinances of God, and Men fall *into Trouble* because of their Transgressions, but again they bethink themselves, and *return to their Duty*, here let them find Mercy with our God. If Dearth, or Wars, or any publick Sickness, or other Judgment should come upon us, and there are solemn Repentings and Supplications in this House, and in such Assemblies as this ; then O LORD, do thou hear and answer, and shew thy Salvation to all that sincerely seek thee. This alludes to that part of the Prayer from the 26th to the 30th Verse of the Chapter.

And if *any Man* repent of his forsaking the Christian Communion, and with a sincere Heart shall renew his Engagements to be the LORD's, Let such find Mercy with Thee our God through a Redeemer. *Solomon's Prayer* is made for the Acceptance of *every Man*, whose Heart God knows, as well as for the Acceptance of a *whole People*, upon their Return to God and their united Addresses to him.

4. We should pray that the Worship of this House may produce a *constant Fear* of God, and *walking in his Ways* to long as we live in the Land. To allude to the 31st Verse. Without a Life of Holy Fear and Obedience, and a Regard to all the Ordinances and Commands of God, and abiding in them as long as we live, our present Offerings and Services will avail us little. Nor will our Prayers and Praises and Vows be at *any Time* accepted,

cepted, unless our Walk and Course of Life be agreeable thereto. But of this more under the next general Head.

5. We should pray for Those that are *Strangers* to the *inward* and *saving Effects* of the *Christian Worship*, and to all *spiritual Tokens* of God's *Presence* and *Acceptance*.

It should be our ardent Desire, That they who hear of the Glory and the Grace of CHRIST JESUS, may be brought inwardly to reverence, and cordially to love Him. That they may acknowledge "his Name to be *above every Name*; since every "Knee is now required to bow before God in the "Name of JESUS, both things in Heaven, in Earth, "and under the Earth; and that every Tongue "should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to "the Glory of God the Father*." Our Prayer should also be, that such as hear of the Religion of JESUS, and the *Power* of his *Gospel* to the Salvation of others, may *themselves* become Examples of the same Grace and Power.

Here our Prayers should be most *extensively charitable*. For we are not only to pray for *Strangers* to us, but even that *Enemies* and *Despisers* of us, may be brought to the Faith, Worship, and Obedience of the Gospel. Upon the 33d Verse of this Chapter, where *Solomon* prays to God, "That all the "People of the Earth may know his Name, and "fear him as *Israel* then did," it hath been observed to our present Purpose,—*Solomon* knew the "Goodness of God to be so great, that, it could "not be a whit lessened toward *Israel*, how far "soever it was extended toward *other People*. Happy "had it been for that Nation if their Charity had "been like this of their heavenly Father. But it "was their seeking to *engross* God's promised Bless-

* Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

20 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

‘ sings to Mankind, which brought that grievous
 ‘ Curse upon them under which they groan at this
 ‘ Day*.

We may, very consistently with the most extensive
 Charity, desire that God would so particularly
 own and bless his Institutions where we worship,
 as that *others* may see and know *He is with us of a*
Truth †. But then we should also pray, that the
Stranger may share in the same Blessings with our
 selves, as *Solomon* prayed for the *Stranger* that was
 not of the People of *Israel*; and that, every where,
 God would be with “ them that love our Lord
 “ JESUS CHRIST in Sincerity ‡.

6. We are taught to pray *distinctly*, for the *Mini-*
sters of God’s House, and for the *People* that wor-
ship there. The Words after the *Text*, which *Solo-*
mon took from his Father *David*, [*Let thy Priests,*
O Lord God, be clothed with Salvation, and let thy
Saints rejoyce in Goodness] may fitly and easily be ac-
 commodated to the Ministers and Congregations of
 Christians, ‘ O thou that art become the Author
 ‘ of eternal Salvation to all them that obey thee, let
 ‘ those that *minister* in thy Name be clothed with
 ‘ Salvation, diligently obeying thee, and strictly
 ‘ observing thine Orders in every thing: Defend
 ‘ and keep them, and make them also Instruments
 ‘ of Salvation *to others*, helping them to take heed
 “ to themselves, and to their Doctrine, that they
 “ may both save Themselves and Those that hear
 “ them. Clothe them with every thing desirable
 “ for thy House, and with every Ornament of
 “ *Righteousness* ||. ‘ Do thou also grant that thy
 ‘ *Saints may rejoyce in Goodness*; That is in all those
 ‘ Blessings, for Time and Eternity, which flow from
 ‘ the *Goodness* of GOD; and grant them all that

* Vid. Patrick.

† Eph. vi. 24.

‡ 1. Cor. xiv. 25.

|| Psal. cxxxii. 9.

‘ Goodness both in themselves, and toward one another, that shall fill thy House with *continual Joy*.’ For so *David* expresseth it, “ Let thy Saints shout for Joy.” ‘ Grant them both the Dispositions of Goodness to create Joy *within*, and all the *Expressions* and *Fruits* of Goodness to spread Joy round about them : “ Let them be known by *these Fruits* of the SPIRIT, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Meekness, and Temperance. In such Goodness as this grant them everlastingly to rejoice.

III. It now remains to shew, In *what manner* our Prayers should be offered unto God, that they may obtain *his attentive* and *favourable Regards*. This Head shall be enlarged on, so as to direct our making a *right Use* of the foregoing Parts of this Discourse, without any further Application. Now that our Prayers may be accepted of God, and meet with a gracious Audience,

1. We must *pray in Faith*.

“ Without Faith it is impossible to please God : “ For he that comes unto God must believe that *He is*, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him *. To believe that God is, implies our believing the *Omnipresence* of an infinite Mind. And that He who is every where, and in all Places, most perfectly knows and observes not only what is *done* and *said* by us, but what lies in our *Hearts* and *Thoughts*. We are therefore to address him in our Prayers, not as a Being *afar off*, but *near* to us, “ in whom we live and move and have our Being †.” Further, to believe that God is, implies our conceiving of a Being *every way perfect*, as well as *every where present*. We must believe in him as the Almighty or All-sufficient God ‡. The God whose Wisdom, Power, Goodness, and

* Heb. xi. 6.

† Acts xvii. 27, 28.

‡ Genes. xvii. 1.

Faithfulness

22 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

Faithfulness are such, that he is able to protect and bless us *wherever we go*, and throughout all Changes of *Times* and Circumstances in this World.

Again it is to be observed distinctly, That Faith in Prayer hath respect to God's being a "REWARDER of them that diligently seek him." This we believe not only from the *infinite Goodness* of his Nature, and his Characters of *Sovereign* and *Judge*, but because he is expressly stiled a God *bearing Prayer* *. And because he hath also given us express *Promises* of his *answering* Prayer in special Cases; and the Experiences of the Faithful, up and down in the Scriptures, *seal* to the Truth of these Promises. God hath spoken with peculiar Grace and Condescension of his Regard to social and united Prayer: Insomuch, that if there be but "two or three gathered together in Christ's Name, He is in the midst of them." Christ says, in that Place, concerning Prayers for the Success of the Gospel, "If two of them agree on Earth touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of his Father which is in Heaven †."

Here we see, if our Prayers be in Faith, they must have a due Respect to the MEDIATOR. "Ye believe in God, saith our Lord Jesus, believe also in ME †." This is set at the Head of a Discourse, wherein he afterward assures them of the Success of Prayer through his NAME. To ascertain the more what he says, he introduceth it with a double Asseveration. "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you" (that is, so far as the Honour of *my Name* is really concerned.) "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name, [either to try the *Power* of it with *Heaven*, or to

* Psal. lxxv. 2.

† Mat. xviii. 19, 20.

‡ John xiv. 1.

Place of Worship in Carter-Lane.

spread the *Fame* of it through the *Earth*.] “ Ask
“ and ye shall receive that your Joy may be full*.

This Honour we are to give to no *other* Name;
nor will the Prayer of Faith *dare* to do it. Because
there is only ONE Mediator betwixt GOD and *Man*
in the Gospel Constitution of things, “ The Man
“ Christ Jesus.” As the believing in ONE GOD,
in Opposition to *Heathen Deities*, was necessary to
the Acceptance of their Worship under the *Old Testa-*
tament; so (together with that) it is as indispensably
required that we should worship in the Name of
one Mediator, in Opposition to the worshipping of
Saints and *Angels*, in order to our being accepted
under the *New Testament*. This Faith, we are sted-
fastly to maintain, in Opposition to the *pretended*
Mediation of the *Virgin Mary*, with the long Train
of Popish Intercessors, to the Honour of whose
Names even Temples and Churches are dedicated.
In Opposition to such Superstition as this, we should
trust our Prayers and Services with Christ alone,
without calling in other *Aids* in a way of Mediation
and Intercession. Thus should we pray *in Faith*.

2. Our Prayers must be *directed*, and *assisted* by
the HOLY SPIRIT; which we are to ask of GOD if
we would *speed* in our asking for *other good things*.

Prayer should be *directed* by the SPIRIT of GOD,
so as to make the *Scripture* our Rule, both to teach
us what things we are to pray for, and in what *or-*
der we are to ask them of GOD. By order, I mean,
what things are to be requested in the *first* and *chief*
Place; and then what are needful in a *secondary*
and subordinate Sense; and what, upon some Oc-
casions, we may *specialy* plead for. But in all par-
ticular Intercessions for temporal Blessings, either re-
specting ourselves or others, we must pray with great
Submission, determining to acquiesce in the Appoint-

* John xvi. 23, 24.

24 A SERMON at the Opening of the

ments of Providence. That we may order our Prayers according to the Direction of the SPIRIT of God, it is adviseable to use the *very Expressions of Scripture* as much as we can. We shall therefore do well to make the *Parts of Scripture* that we read or hear, the Guide of those Prayers that *immediately* follow; and to mind the *Connexion* of things when we do so, as the Wisdom of the Holy Ghost hath seen fit to place them.

And, that this may be done with the *greater Care*, there is no doubt, with me, but *Forms of Prayer* may be composed for the Use both of our *selves* and *others*. *Publick Forms* that are carefully examined by Scripture, and made to accord with it, are greatly to be valued on that account, and very proper to be used*. But they should not be made of such Necessity as to exclude *free Prayer*, where this is preferred to set Forms by a Christian Congregation. If *any Form* whatsoever had been of SUCH NECESSITY as this, surely He who endited the Scriptures, and who planted Christian Societies and gave all proper Orders for the regulating and continuing of them, would either have endited such a *Form* himself, or have given some express *Direction* for the drawing up of such a Form, as soon as his miraculous Gifts should cease in the Church.

* The *Reformed Liturgy* drawn up in the last Age, and approved by many of our *Fathers*, shews that those of *our Way* are no Enemies to *Forms of Prayer* in publick Assemblies; but only to those things that are not thought agreeable to *Scripture*; or that if they are agreeable to some Men, yet while they are of *doubtful Disputation*, should be left at *Liberty* either to *use* or *not use* any Part of them, according to differing Judgments concerning them. Those publick Preachers do not represent us truly to the *People*, who charge us with confining the *Spirit of Prayer* to an absolute rejecting of all Forms. We do not limit the Direction of the SPIRIT, either to Men's praying *with*, or *without* a Form; but to their praying as the HOLY GHOST directs in his *own Writings*.

But to say no more of this, in a Kingdom where *free Prayer* is indulged, as well as a public *Form* appointed; They that pray with a *Form*, and they that pray *without one*, are both of them to seek the Assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT, or else their Prayers will not be acceptable in the Sight of God. Therefore we read of praying in the *Holy-Ghost*, that we may build up ourselves in our most *Holy Faith*, and keep ourselves in the *Love of God* *. And in prophetic Language, “ the Spirit of Grace and of
“ Supplications comes down upon those that look
“ on him whom they have pierced, and mourn for
“ him †.” St. Paul says, “ the Spirit helpeth
“ our Infirmities, for we know not what we should
“ pray for as we ought [or in the *Manner* we ought]
“ but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us ‡.”

When *David* sets himself to put up a Prayer that should be acceptable to God, he requests, that
“ God would uphold him with his *free Spirit* ||.”
It is want of this *free Spirit* in the Services of Religion, that makes us backward to them, and soon weary of them. Fear and Suppression of Mind, and a Distrust of Acceptance with God, or a Carelessness about it, and Thoughts rambling another way, spoil the *Success* that might otherwise be expected from the Exercises of Devotion. But the SPIRIT of Christianity is given to remedy these Disorders: “ For God hath not given us the *Spirit* of
“ Fear, but of Power, and of Love, and of a
“ sound Mind §.” He is given to enlighten our Minds, to renew our Natures, and to unite Christians in Love, and to comfort their Hearts; and in so doing to produce the Fruits of *Holiness, Peace* and Joy in believing, and to be an earnest of the heavenly Inheritance? In these respects the Holy

* Ep. Jude ver. 20, 21.

† Rom. viii. 26.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 7.

† Zech. xii. 10.

|| Psal. li. 12.

26 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

Spirit was given to abide with the Church, or the whole Body of Christians; and without him these Blessings are not to be expected or enjoyed.

Therefore I said, that if we do not ask this SPIRIT of GOD, our Prayers will not speed in our asking for other good things. When our Saviour saith in one Place, that our heavenly Father will give good things to them that ask him*; in another Place which is parallel to that, our heavenly Father is said to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him†: Evidently implying, that in GOD's giving his Spirit, all those good things Christ spoke of are given by his means, and with him, but not without him. Thus should we pray for the Spirit, according to his Direction, and by his Assistance, if we expect our Prayers should speed well.

3. As we must pray in the Spirit, so we must pray with Understanding. Pray for such things, that all who understand and believe the Gospel, may say Amen; and in such Language as is well known to all that joyn in the publick Prayers. The Scripture expressly forbids the Corinthians to pray in an unknown Tongue. And therefore St. Paul says, "I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also†."

Prayer ought certainly to be a reasonable Service, or it cannot be acceptable to GOD. But how can it be a reasonable Service, unless the Understanding go along with the Words that are uttered? Our Prayers should not be mere *ex tempore* Effusions; but the settled habitual Desires of our Souls, expressed in a reasonable and intelligible manner. A due regard to this, will take off most of the Objections that are urged against free Prayer.

* Mat. vii. 7, 11.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

† Luke xi. 13.

As there are a thousand Cafes, in which Men are allowed to represent things with sound Understanding, and good Acceptance, and to plead a Matter that they have at Heart in proper Language, without having what they say before their Eyes to read it: So may we represent things unto God, and plead with him in Prayer, in a very reasonable and understanding Manner, when we speak from well instructed and well affected Hearts, though we have not a *Form of Prayer* before our Eyes. “ Pour out your Heart before him *.” Reading a Prayer, if there be a false and wandring Heart, is not praying. Nor is uttering a Prayer without a Book, if there be a roving disaffected Mind, a praying in the Sight of God. But if there be a fixed and faithful Heart, it will be able to speak its own and others *common Wants and Desires*, provided there be a competent Knowledge of the Things of Religion, so as to be well pleasing to God. We find also by Experience, that this may be done without Displeasing sensible Men, yea with great Advantage sometimes to excite a kindly Warmth in their Devotions. In short, whether Men pray with, or without a *Form*, they must take care to pray with the *Understanding*, and with the strict Attention of their reasonable Powers.

4. Our Prayers must be accompanied with *giving Thanks* to God for all his Mercies to us. This is expressly mentioned in our Rule. “ In every thing “ by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, “ let your Requests be made known unto God †. We have great Reason for Gratitude and Praise this Day, both on account of spiritual and temporal Blessings; both for publick and private Mercies. We should be thankful particularly for the Goodness of God to us, as a religious Society. That after many of our Friends are dead and gone, (tho’ we hope

* Psal. lxii. 8.

† Phil. iv. 6.

gone to a much better *Temple* and Assembly than any on Earth,) we are amongst the living that are yet capable of praising God, and promoting his Kingdom and Honour on this Earth. There is one thing worthy your Observation this Day, That although there is only *one Family*, and four single Persons left in this Communion, of those with whom I first settled in *Black-Fryars*, that you are notwithstanding so prosperous and numerous, and have been inclined to and owned of God in this good Work. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be the Glory.” Let us be thankful for the Presence of God, and his Blessing, so far; and go on faithfully serving him, and trusting him for the time to come. Be thankful that we have been enabled to *Design* a thing, and *bring it to pass*; and that the Hearts of so many have been brought *cheerfully* into this Service. We should not be insensible of the Mercy of *Providence* all the *Time of building* this House, that no calamitous Accidents have happened to any concerned in this Work. But let us be more especially thankful for all that hath been done for our Souls; and the LORD perfect that which concerns us.

5. There is another apostolical Direction to be observed in our Prayers, and that is to *lift up Holy Hands unto God*. We have before observed, that Prayer, and other Institutions of divine Worship, will not avail us unless our Course of Life be *agreeable* thereto. I now add, that if our Hands be unjust, impure, and sinful, to lift them up toward Heaven, is to affront the Holiness and other Perfections of GOD: It is a kind of Challenge to Him who hath declared that he *hateth* the Workers of *Iniquity*.

Where Men's Actions are unholy and unrighteous, their pretended Devotions are a great Offence to GOD. The Prophets speak with mighty Vehemence
on

on this Head, and utter the most terrible things. *Sacrifice*, and *Offerings*, and *Incense*, God declares were an *Abomination*, when Iniquity abounded in *Israel*. God tells them, that He would *not hear*, though they made *many Prayers*, unless they would put away the *Evil of their Doings* from before his Eyes*. In another Place God saith, “Will ye “steal, murder, commit Adultery, swear falsely— “and come and stand before me in this House “which is called by my Name†?—I will cast “you out of my Sight.” Such Passages as these abound in the *prophetical Writings*.

Our Saviour in like manner plainly declares, That calling him LORD, LORD, and having his *Word* taught in our *Streets*, and *eating* and *drinking* in his Presence, will not recommend us to his Favour and Approbation at last, if we *do not the Will* of his Father who is in Heaven‡.

In the Psalmist's Language, it is expressed thus, “If I regard Iniquity in my *Heart*, the LORD will “not hear my Prayer§.”

These Places are oft quoted, and well known to you, but they are of such indispensable Importance to the Success of our Prayers, that it is requisite we should be put in Mind of them upon this Occasion.

If there be any Iniquity in our Hands or Hearts, let it be put far away, that our Prayers may not be hindered this Day. “Confess *your Faults* one to “another (saith St. *James*) and pray one for another: Upon which it follows immediately, “The effectual fervent Prayer of a *righteous Man* availeth “much§.” If the Prayer of one *righteous Man* hath such mighty Power, what might be expected from the Prayer of a *righteous Assembly*? Yea, who can tell but God is saying over us, ‘if I find fifty,

* Isaiah i. 4, 13, 15, 16, &c. † Jer. vii. 9, 10, 14, 15.

‡ Mat. vii. 21. Luke xiii. 26, 27. § Psal. lxxvi. 18.

§ James v. 16.

30 *A SERMON at the Opening of the*

‘ *twenty, ten* righteous Persons in such a Place, I
 ‘ will accept the Prayers put up there, and will
 ‘ bless them? And who would not be ambitious in
 this Case, to be found of such an honourable Num-
 ber? If any that have lived in a sinful Misimprove-
 ment of former Means of Grace, or in a Course of
 Life condemned by the Gospel, could be persuaded
 to bring *new Hearts* into a *new* Place of Worship, it
 would make this a joyful Place; and there would
 be Joy in Heaven too *in the Presence of the Angels of*
God over one Sinner that repenteth *.

6. Our Prayers must be without *Wrath and dis-*
puting. So some read the Direction given to *Timo-*
thy in a Place before quoted †. The House of God
 is not a House for philosophising, and publishing
 the mere Conjectures and Inventions of Men, and
 bandying these to and fro; but for declaring the
Counsel and sure Word of God: “ Thy Word is
 “ Truth †.” It is not a House for Men to vent
 their *party Heats*, and violent Passions in; but to
 publish good Tydings, and to breathe *Love* and
Charity. It is not for Contention, but Devotion:
 “ It is written my House is the House of Prayer †.”

Nevertheless it must be added, that it is not a
 Place to *flatter* in, or to fear telling Men of the
 Danger of their *Errors*, and *Transgressions*. Nor is
 it a Place for *Indolence*, as if the Service of God
 was a mere dreaming Service. Nor is it a House
 for *Amusement*, and Entertainment merely to *see* and
 be *seen*; (a use that some are very desirous to turn
 our Places of Worship to:) No: These things are
 such direct Contradictions to the Rules given us for
 ordering *Christian Churches*, that it should never be
 counted *Wrath*, warmly and publickly to expose
 such Evils. One would wish for a Zeal like that of
 our Saviour to drive *profane* and *mercenary* Men out

* Luke xv. 10.

† John xvii. 17.

† 1 Tim. ii. 8.

‖ Luke xix. 46.

of our Temples, rather than to contrive Methods for indulging their Humours, and entertaining them among those that reverence GOD's Sanctuary. I am much afraid, that the *Hurt* such Persons do to religious Societies, when upon any *worldly Consideration* they are brought into them, is much greater than the *Good* they receive.

Love to GOD, and Christ and the Christian Institutions, will excite a becoming concern to Maintain the *Honour* and *Credit* of Divine Worship, and of our Christian Assemblies. This being preserved and maintained, every private and personal *Quarrel* should be intirely laid aside, when we bring our Gift unto GOD's Altar: And every Dispute about things *doubtful*, and not essential to the Character of a Christian, should be kept out of our Prayers: And all Animosities on account of various external *Rites* and *Forms*, in different Churches, should give way to a prevailing Charity. For our Prayers should ever breath this Language; *viz.* That the Grace of GOD which bringeth Salvation may appear to *all Men*; and that all who believe the Gospel may be *perfect-ed* in Love; that they may be *one* in CHRIST JESUS, so that the World may know he was sent of GOD. *Brotherly Love* is as necessary, as *Faith*, and *Understanding*, to render our Prayers acceptable in the Sight of GOD.

All that come within the Compass of the *seven* Points of *Unity*, mark'd out by St. *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, should have our affectionate Regards, when we are imploring the Favour and Presence of GOD with his Church. Our united and most earnest Desire should be, that more of the SPIRIT of CHRIST may be poured down upon the *whole Body* of Christians. Thus, we are not serving ourselves, only, by the Prayers of such a Day as this, but we may be the Instruments of procuring Blessings for *others*. And we specially hope and pray

32 A SERMON at the Opening of the

that the Requests made for Us by them that are come to with us *Good Speed* in the Name of the LORD, may be returned doubly upon *Themselves* and upon their respective *Congregations*. 'The Good Lord

' prosper us all, in our different *Apartments* in his ' Family ; and prepare us for that World where all ' the Families that belong to CHRIST, shall be ' joyned in One perfected and most blissful Assem- ' bly, and shall be for ever with the LORD.

Lastly. If we would secure a Blessing, our Prayers must be continued and importunate.

Our Blessed Lord spake a *Parable* on purpose to engage his Disciples " To pray and not to faint." And he describes the manner of Importunity in Prayer that shall be successful, by directing us not only to *ask*, but to *seek* ; and after that, still to *knock* till it be opened unto us. Such Phrases as those of giving GOD *no rest* till he hear, — of not *letting him go* till he bless us, and the like, shew that there should be an undeniable kind of *Expostulation* in Prayer.

Since our Lot is cast in an Age when *Days of Prayer* are not only neglected, but discouraged by many ; and *special Favours* in answer to Prayer are, by very few, soundly believed and expected ; we should take Occasion, from hence to *increase our Importunity*, instead of becoming cold and disheartned. On this very Account we should plead with GOD, that he would be pleased to honour Prayer in our Day, so as to revive the Credit of it. This we may do in such Words as those of the Prophet *Jeremy*, with which I conclude, (*Jer. xiv. 7—9.*

" O Lord, though our Iniquities testify against
" us, do thou it for thy Name's Sake: For our Back-
" slidings are many, we have sinned against thee—
" yet thou art in the midst of us, and we are called
" by thy Name, Leave us not.

To GOD be Glory throughout all Ages. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

The HYMN composed for this
Occasion.

I.

WILL GOD, from his eternal Throne,
On mortal Worshipers look down?
JEHOVAH, we adore thy Grace,
And to thy Name devote this Place.

II.

Accept the *Gifts* that rais'd this Frame,
To Thee return'd, from Thee they came:
With these, our *Hearts* we offer too,
Thy living Temples here below.

III.

LORD JESUS this Assembly bless,
With thy continu'd Grace and Peace.
Let *Pray'r* and *Praise* as Incense rise,
Perfum'd by thy rich Sacrifice.

IV.

Here let thy *Word* convert the Soul,
And Pow'rs of Sin and Hell controul:
Let chearful *Alms*, and faithful *Vows*,
Increase the Blessings of this House.

V.

Here let the SPIRIT of Truth, and Love,
Prepare us for the Joys above:
Guard us from Errors, and from Jars,
From persecuting Spite, and Wars.

VI.

And when our Souls are fully drest,
For Seats of Everlasting Rest,
Let many from these Courts arise,
To fill those Mansions in the Skies.

The HYMN composed for this
Occasion.

W ILLIAM, from his royal Throne,
On mighty Mount Sion look down;
Behold us, we adore thy Grace,
And as thy Name adore this Place.

Accuse the Gilt that stain'd this Name,
To Thee return'd, from I have come;
With thee, our hearts we offer up,
Thy living Temples here be up.



Lord Jesus this Atonement make,
With thy commandments we obey;
In Praise and Love we'll ever be,
Remember'd by thy Name.

Here let thy Word be our true Guide,
And Power of Sin and Hell control;
For cleansing Blood, and inward Light,
Increase the Blessings of this Hour.

Here let the Spirit of Truth, and Love,
Inspire us for the Joy above;
Guard us from Error, and from Sin,
From persecuting Sin, and Woe.

And when our Souls are fully dress'd,
For Seats of Everlasting Rest, we
May from that Court arise,
To fill those Mansions in the Skies.

